

Outdoor

4X4 - BIVOUAC - ADVENTURE

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**SPECIAL
ROAD TRIP**
12 pages

CENTRAL MASSIF

Land of legend (2nd part)



NOMADEO
The Globe Camper cell



BIVOUAC COOKING
The Outdoor raclette



DIARIES OF THE ADVENTURER
River fishing



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comparison

James Baroud Vision VS Chinese Line

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With the kind participation of Ionut
Puccianu and Rémy Delorme

PORTUGAL VS. CHINA



Chinese products are generally cheaper than Western products and, in most cases, the prices of Chinese products are considerably lower. This is all the more striking when we compare two rooftop tents : the James Baroud Vision tent and a Chinese tent...

In light of the current health crisis and the uncertain economical context, many people are wondering about the origin of the products available on the market. Whether you are looking to buy "fairer", favouring Western products and a more responsible economy, or to avoid buying junk by focusing on price rather than quality, it is always helpful to know where a product comes from... Especially when that product has been designed to provide shelter night after night while travelling for long periods of time.

The Bivouac and the rice field

Here we have the Chinese tent, which is the epitome of an Asian tent. You can order a tent like this directly from Alibaba.com starting at around \$280 per unit. If you add \$250 for shipping to the United States, Australia, England or Eastern Europe, this tent should cost you no more than \$550 (these rates may be reduced if you make a group purchase, with a

friend for example.). This type of tent is available all over the world and can be found under more than 38 names. It can also be found among the catalogues of well-known brands for anywhere between \$1,540 and \$2,770! Some of these brands try to hide their origin by creating production units in South Africa, Australia or the United States, but they always have the same origin: China. Following a previous article that was severely criticised by four European distributors, we asked them to provide us with photos of their factory and staff in order to disprove our allegations. One year later, we are still waiting to receive them...

General information

In terms of weight, the two tents are virtually the same: 59 kg for the Djebel and 60 kg for the Vision. Both tents are protected by high quality, thick fabric. At the top, the Vision is less bulky than the Djebel.



This is due to its ultra-compact rounded shape and the fact that it does not have an apse. It is only when putting up and taking down the tents that we can see the real differences. The Vision is a semi-automatic tent equipped with two hydraulic jacks. If you visit our Dailymotion page (dailymotion.....), you can see that it takes about 2 minutes to open it and put it up. The Chinese tent requires a lot of work and takes about 7 minutes to put up. The same goes for taking them down: 2 minutes for the Vision and 8 minutes for the Chinese tent. One might say that 5 minutes is no big deal... But it could make all the difference in the wind, heavy rain or a snow storm.

The canvas

The James Baroud tent is made from the Tencate fabric found in NASA space suits. This state-of-the-art aluminium-coated polyester fabric is produced in Holland by one of the two leading geo-textile manufacturers. Not only is it UV resistant, it is also waterproof and breathable, a manufacturing concept that might be compared to the famous Goretex fabric, which comes straight from Northern Europe (developed in partnership with Scandinavian, Dutch and German laboratories).

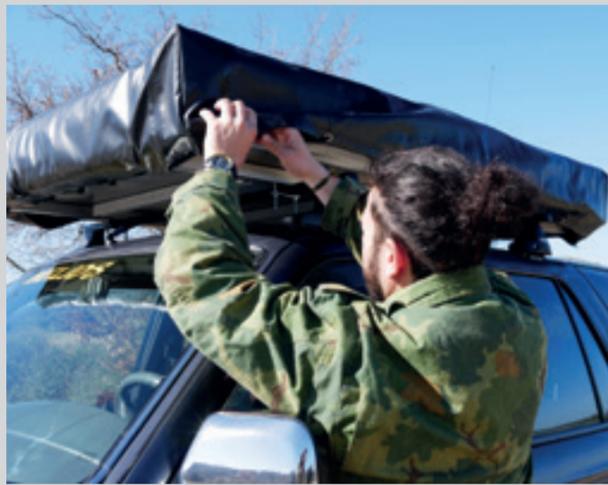
Which one should I choose?

1,227 dollars between the Chinese tent and the Vision... People who are not very demanding, who do not go travelling often and who only do so during the summer months may be tempted by the price of the Chinese tent. Or any other Chinese tent of the same type for that matter, even if it only offers a one-year guarantee and is of inferior quality. However, those looking for reliability, technicality and safety, with a 5-year guarantee and a tent that can be used on all types of terrains and in all seasons, will not worry about the 1,000 euro difference and are more likely to opt for the Vision. All this, plus the fact that they are choosing a European product as opposed to a Chinese one...





The Chinese tent's protective cover is fitted with Velcro fasteners. These Velcros become less effective over time. To prevent the cover from being torn off while travelling, you will need to add extra straps.



The Vision's cover is equipped with a reinforced elastic cord. It's simple and effective; 3 years on, it hasn't budged.



The Vision is a semi-automatic tent equipped with two hydraulic jacks. It opens up by itself.

This fabric is very popular in the outdoor world, where it is often found in top-of-the-range clothing, hiking boots and mountaineering tents. It is designed to regulate humidity and indoor temperature by venting CO₂, the main cause of condensation. It is important to note that the Vision can also be fitted with a removable neoprene thermal insulation fabric, which has two advantages: it keeps the cold out whilst increasing the internal temperature by a few degrees, and it significantly reduces condensation, even in extremely cold weather conditions.

Although the colours may vary, the Chinese tent fabrics are almost always the same: 70% polyester and 30% cotton.



Two completely different systems: the Chinese tent's classic opening and the Vision's semi-automatic opening.



The Vision is ready to use in just 2 minutes. The Chinese tent takes 5 minutes longer. With the Vision, the ladder is not attached to the tent and can be positioned on either side, unlike the Chinese tent ladder which is attached to the floor.

This is an inexpensive fabric, and the manufacturer can save money by playing with the weight of the fabric. Also, polyester fabrics are about as waterproof as a shopping bag. No more, no less. But if it's too thin, its water resistance will be limited. Hence the need to add a flysheet, especially when the fabric is the same thickness as cigarette paper. But this flysheet needs to be well stretched and should not

come into contact with the tent canvas, otherwise it is useless! During our tests, we found that the Chinese tent's flysheet fell in on the tent cover during heavy rain and snow. This leads to a phenomenon called capillarity, which inevitably leads to water leaking in. Unlike the Vision, which can withstand very heavy showers and snowfall, the Chinese tent is not at all suitable for such weather conditions.



Once you have set up the Chinese tent, you will then need fit the awning tension cables and fix the guy lines that secure the tent to the ground.



The Vision's curved shape is less affected by the wind. The same cannot be said for the Chinese tent with its large flat walls that are put under extreme stress by the slightest gust of wind.



The large awnings are perfect in calm conditions. It's best to close them when it's a little too windy, otherwise you are likely to be kept up all night or risk them being ripped off completely. This has the effect of sealing the openings, which, in this case, can no longer be used to regulate the air flow and will in turn lead to a high level of condensation.

Wind resistance

Just like the igloo, from which it takes on its spherical shape, the Vision provides unparalleled wind resistance. This tent can withstand even the strongest gusts

of wind without any difficulties. The same cannot be said for the Chinese tent, whose shape and size provide a dreadful wind resistance. During a night in the Camargue, on the beach of Beauduc, our anemometer recorded



The large apse means you can access the room without getting wet.

wind speeds of up to 108 km/hr. This posed no problems for the Vision, except that we were a little shaken up. The Chinese tent however, which was parked just a few metres away, fell apart, with its flysheet, one of its side canopies and part of the front apse being ripped off when the guy ropes became detached from the ground. The crew spent the rest of the night in the car and threw the tent away the next day.

The Vision and space

In terms of overall volume, the Vision is smaller than the Chinese tent. But in terms of interior volume, it's more or less the same, with a 140 mattress for both. The shape of the Chinese tent is very similar to that of military and Saharan tents that have been used by armies around the world since ancient times. It's fine while the weather is good, but the thin canvas is not so good when the weather turns bad. When closed, the Vision is a real cocoon; the thick canvas and its high level of tension are very reassuring. But it's when all its "windows" are open that you get a real sense of space, with that 360° vision that has become the trademark of James Baroud tents.

The "Panzer" of the rooftop tent world

Like the German tanks of the Second World War, which were often better armed and more resistant than those of their enemies, James Baroud's tents are designed to withstand the most extreme conditions. For example, the safety gantry under the floor overhang makes the whole unit more rigid and provides better attachment to the ground. This option is not available from competitors whose long overhangs rely solely on the ladder.



This Vision model is equipped with neoprene thermal insulation. This "second skin" can be removed, but you can also leave it permanently in the tent.



The arches on the Chinese tent are made of aluminium but the joints are made of steel... Steel that has rusted after 3 years.



A South African tent... made in China (photos taken with a hidden camera). This tent will be shipped directly to Europe and other continents where it will be marked with the logo of a well-known brand.



The Chinese zip fasteners are of poor quality and should be handled with care...



The inside of the Vision without its thermal insulation. A real cocoon with its 150 cm mattress.

The finish on the Chinese tent leaves a little to be desired, as can be seen with the bottom of the wall that seems to be pulled in all directions, unlike the Vision, whose canvas fits perfectly to the floor frame.



The Vision's floor is reinforced, unlike that of the Chinese tents.

The reinforcement gantry. Exclusive to James Baroud tent and provides better stability.



Despite appearances, the Chinese tent is actually no bigger than the Vision. It has a 140 mattress, while the Portuguese tent has a 150 mattress.



To fold down the Vision, simply pull on the strap provided.



Less than 2 minutes to completely fold up the Vision and more than 7 minutes to fold up the Chinese tent. In good weather, when there is no wind or rain...

James Baroud Vision - origin of the materials

- The canvas: The Netherlands
 - Zip fasteners: Portugal
 - Hydraulic jacks: Germany
 - The aluminium chassis and frame: Portugal
 - The mattress: Portugal
 - The ladder: Portugal
- Design, manufacture and materials: 100% European**

A "small" defect that can be a major cause of tearing when the wind is strong. Another advantage of this gantry is that the tent overhang is supported by it and not by the ladder, which can be fitted to either side of the tent. A luxury you don't have when it comes to Chinese tents.

Attachments and accessories

Both tents can be fitted with an additional room that can be set up under the tent. The one with the Chinese tent is a little larger, but its living space is somewhat reduced by the ladder. That being said, with the ladder inside, you can go from one part



Thanks to Ionut and Remy for their active participation in this comparative test.



A panoramic view: the Vision truly deserves its name!

of the tent to the other without having to face the elements. The Vision's lower room is not affected by the ladder.

What about the price?

The 150 version of the Vision tent costs \$2,413. The 140 version of the Chinese tent costs \$1,186, but the same tent can be found on the market for anything between \$ 1,540 and \$ 2,770!